

THE SACRED INFANCY

*Meditations for the Month of
January*

L. RICHARDS LEWIS

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FOREWORD

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JANUARY

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1st. Circumcision of our Lord

St. Luke ii. 21
Colossians ii. 8-15

Christ is "obedient to the Law for man", which ordered circumcision as the condition of admission to the Old Covenant. Baptism takes its place as the condition of admission to the New Covenant.

2nd

Romans iv. 8-25

Faith was necessary for Abraham, if circumcision was to avail him. So faith is necessary for those approaching Baptism (*Hebrews xi. 6*), in order to receive its grace. At infant Baptism faith is supplied by the Church through the officiating minister and the godparents.

3rd

Isaiah xlix. 13-24

The extension of the Church beyond the chosen people, and the coming of Gentile kings to greet the Infant Christ is prophesied.

4th

Micah v. 2-4

Christ's "going forth" is from everlasting. He is eternally proceeding from the Father. His entry into his world is to be at Bethlehem, the birthplace of David, whose Son he is after the flesh.

5th

St. Matthew ii. 1-8

The star prophesied by Balaam (*Numbers xxiv. 17*) causes Wise Men from the east to come seeking the new-born King of the Jews. Herod, reminded of Micah's prophecy, sends them to Bethlehem.

6th. *Epiphany of our Lord* *St Matthew ii. 9-12*

On finding Christ, the Wise Men worship him as King, Priest and Prophet, offering gold, incense and myrrh. Myrrh (used in embalming the dead) symbolizes Christ's Passion, which fulfils prophecy (*St Luke xxiv. 25-7*).

7th *Psalm lxxii* (Prayer Book Version)

This psalm, written as a prayer for Solomon, was inspired as a prophecy of Christ's overlordship acknowledged by the Wise Men. Christ's dominion is universal.

8th *St Matthew ii. 13-18*

From his earliest childhood the Son of Man "hath not where to lay his head" (*St Matthew viii. 20*). We must not be too attached to our homes and possessions; the war should have taught us this lesson. Even the youngest can "glorify God".

9th *St Matthew ii. 19-20*
Exodus iv. 19
Isaiah xix. 1, 8, 13-25

Moses, on the death of his persecutors, returned into Egypt to deliver the Jews. Christ, on the death of his persecutors, leaves Egypt to return to the Promised Land: to deliver all mankind.

10th *St Matthew ii. 23*
Jeremiah xxiii. 5, 6

Jeremiah's word "Branch" is the same in Hebrew as "Nazarene". Justice (i.e. rendering what is due to God and our neighbour, *Romans xiii. 7*) is a divine "perfection" sadly lacking in the world as a result of the Fall.

11th *St Luke ii. 25-33*

It is to the just and devout that the sight of Christ is granted. They "depart in peace" (*Wisdom iii. 1-3; Isaiah lvii. 1, 2*). Christ is hailed as the true light.

12th *St Luke ii. 36-40*

Fasting and prayer give insight into divine things. Redemption must be sought (*St Matthew xi. 12*). Christ is eternally "full of wisdom".

13th *St Luke ii. 41-7*

It is easy to lose Christ. When lost, he must be sought (*Song of Solomon iii. 1-4*) not among our kinsfolk and acquaintance, but in God's house by prayer and worship. Human wisdom is nothing beside God's omniscience (*1 Corinthians i. 19-20*).

14th *St Luke ii. 48-52*

We must not expect always to enjoy the conscious presence of Christ, nor must we reproach him at times of spiritual dryness (*Job ii. 9-10*). If we go about our Father's business, however distasteful, we shall find him. Christ sets an example of obedience to parents.

15th *St Matthew xv. 3-9*
Exodus xx. 12

This is the "first commandment with promise", the only commandment of which the reward is expressly stated—length of days. It stands first among the commandments teaching our duty to our neighbour, showing that the first duty we owe to our fellow-creatures is to our parents.

16th *Ephesians vi. 1-4*

Children have duties to parents, and parents to children: to understand them; to teach them religion, by example as well as by precept.

17th *Psalm cxxii. (Prayer Book Version)*

It is easier to take a child to church than to send it. Children who have been taken regularly to worship with their parents from the earliest years are "glad" all their lives.

18th *Proverbs vi. 20-3*

God is the Father of all, the only "Creator" (*St Matthew* xxiii. 9), but his mode of acting towards men is through human agency. A parent "pro-creates", and so represents God to his children and is entitled to be called "father". Hence parental commandments are to be obeyed as coming from God, unless they conflict with the clear will of God.

19th *Proverbs xxiii. 22-6*

Children in their helpless infancy have been tended by their parents. Their greatest earthly privilege should be to tend their parents in weakness and old age. To despise parents, for social or similar reasons, is most displeasing to God (*Ecclesiasticus* ii. 2-16; iii. 27-8).

20th *I John ii. 13-17*

A picture (reflecting Christ's infancy and youth) of what Christian children, adolescents and parents should be. The strength of our prime should not be given to "sowing wild oats"—"the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life".

21st *Judges xiii. 2-8*

Samson, born to deliver God's people from their enemies, is a type of Christ. He is "a Nazarite unto God from the womb". His parents ask their Guardian Angel to direct his upbringing. Do Christian parents always do this?

22nd *Psalm ii (Prayer Book Version)*

The world's opposition to the divine ordering is unavailing. Christians should lose no opportunity of "preaching the Law" by proclaiming this. Fear and reverence should accompany any approach to God. Irreverence to his Son provokes the anger of the eternal Father.

23rd *Acts iv. 23-30*

The interpretation and practical application of *Psalm ii*. Those who cling at all costs to worldly position (Herod, Pilate, the Jews) become involuntary agents in their own destruction by their opposition to the holy Child Jesus. The Gentiles (the world at large) share their destiny.

24th. *St Timothy* *2 Timothy i, 1-5; iii. 15*

A Christian child depends on parental influence and example to develop the gift of faith implanted at Baptism. Early habits of reading Holy Scripture help this, and should be encouraged.

25th. *Conversion of St Paul* *Jeremiah i. 1-11*

God has a plan for all. The youngest and most unlikely may become his most effective servants. St Paul was one of those "gathered together against the holy Child Jesus" (*Galatians* i. 13-16), yet he was "set over the Gentiles" to root out error and to plant the true religion. Under God all non-Jewish Christians owe their religion to him.

26th

Revelation xii. 1-5

A picture of the Incarnation and infancy of Christ. By provoking the slaughter of the Innocents, Satan tries to devour the Child as soon as he was born. The twelve stars represent the Jewish Church, over which the Apostles are appointed to rule (*St Matthew* xix. 27, 28).

27th. *St John Chrysostom*

Exodus iv. 10-13

Eloquence (like that of St John Chrysostom) like all natural talents is a divine gift. God can use those who are apparently the most unsuitable agents, and will supplement their natural deficiencies, if they depend on him (*St Matthew* x. 18-20).

28th

1 Kings iii. 5-10

Christ's condescension in consenting to the gradual development of the mental and bodily powers of his human nature, should teach us humble dependence on God who gives all. Christian youth should recognise its immaturity, and ask "an understanding heart".

29th

Galatians iii. 24-9

Obedience to the Law brings us to Christ. By faith we become in Baptism the brethren of Christ. So we are "all one" in Christ, and heirs of the promise to Abraham.

30th. *King Charles, Martyr*

Psalm lxxiv. 1-11

(Prayer Book Version)

Christ's Church here in earth is always liable to persecution. Churchfolk must be ready to suffer and die for their principles. They should value the external accessories of worship, but not mistake them for essentials. If we have the Sacraments (even though not administered as we are accustomed to have them) we must use them thankfully, though "we see not our tokens".

31st

St Matthew iii

Christ closed his infancy and youth by coming to John for Baptism—an act of voluntary humiliation and of public testimony. Do we combine both in *our* enterprises? It is acceptable to the Father and to the Holy Ghost.

Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof, but speak the word only, and my soul shall be healed.

THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST

*Meditations for the Month of
February*

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FEBRUARY

THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST

1st

St Matthew iv. 1-11

At the outset of his earthly ministry, Christ rejects Satan's temptations to use his almightiness: (1) for his own comfort; (2) to force men's free-will by compelling them to accept him through an exhibition of power; (3) to share his rightful dominion by compromising with evil.

2nd. *Candlemas Day*

St Luke ii. 22-4

Leviticus xii

Christ's Presentation in the temple shows his "obedience to the Law for man", and his humility in choosing a Mother too poor to make an offering of a lamb. The small offerings of the poor may be more acceptable than the large ones of the wealthy (*St Mark xii. 41-4*).

3rd

St John ii. 13-25

Christ is God. He knows all things, even the most secret thoughts of men's hearts. His Church here on earth is always being corrupted by power, position, money, etc. He cleanses it by the scourge of persecution. The Church is his Body.

4th

St John iii. 1-12

Christ proclaims Baptism as the appointed means of entering God's Kingdom the Church. The Holy Ghost works through water to cause men to be reborn as Christians; if lost, they will be lost as Christians. Hence, Baptism cannot be repeated. It imprints a "character" on the soul.

5th *St Mark i. 14-22*
Christ calls the first Apostles to catch men for God. Directly they recognise the call they leave their occupations, their home surroundings and their parents. God's claims must come first.

6th. *St Titus* *Titus i. 1-5*
2 Corinthians viii. 23-4
Titus has received from Paul the Apostle the power as a bishop of handing on grace to others through the Sacrament of Holy Order. Like all bishops, he is a "partner" of the Apostles. It is through the Apostolic Succession that Christians have the assurance of grace in the Sacraments.

7th *St John v. 30-47*
The Old Testament testifies of Christ; Moses wrote of him. Christ bids us "search the Scriptures", which are one means of coming to know the nature and will of God, whom we have not seen and whose voice we have not heard.

8th *St Matthew x. 1-16*
Christ chooses the twelve Apostles, including "Judas, which also betrayed him". He gives them power to heal the sick, to cleanse the lepers, to raise the dead and to cast out devils. They are at first only commissioned to the chosen people. At the judgment it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for those who reject them. They are to be wise and harmless.

9th *St Luke vi. 17-38*
Christ pronounces four blessings, counterbalanced by four woes. The duty of *loving* (not *liking*) enemies is proclaimed, together with mercy, as divine attributes. A warning is given against judging others.

10th *St Luke x. 1-20*
Christ sends out seventy, to go before him wherever he will go. They are to rely for maintenance on those to whom they minister. Those who despise them despise God. They are not to rejoice because of the work done through their agency, but because their names are written in heaven.

11th *St Mark ix. 2-10*
Peter, James and John form the inner circle of the Apostles. They are chosen to witness Christ's eternal Godhead testified to by the Old Law (Moses) and the Prophets (Elijah). Though it is good for them to be on the mount of Transfiguration, they may not remain there. Such encouragements can only be occasional and transitory in this world.

12th *St Mark v. 22-43*
Because of her faith, the woman with the issue of blood is healed. Such faith casts out fear and strengthens hope. Christians should not be afraid of "troubling" God's representatives for the administration of the Sacraments. Peter, James and John are again chosen to witness Christ's power as God to raise the dead.

13th *St Luke xi. 1-4*
Prayer is our mode of converse with God, and must be learnt like any other form of speech. We must take trouble over it. Christ gives, not general directions, but a set form—"Our Father"—on which prayer is to be modelled. He thus justifies set forms of prayer.

14th *St Mark ii. 1-5*

The man sick with the palsy is healed through the faith of his friends. God accepts such acts of faith, hope, charity and contrition on behalf of those who for good reasons cannot make them for themselves. So at infant Baptism, the necessary faith and contrition are supplied through the officiating minister and the god-parents.

15th *St Luke viii. 22-5*

The forces of nature are subject to God, who is their Creator. He will not allow those who trust in him to be overwhelmed, though he may use such means to teach and discipline them. Cf. the Prayerbook Prayer for Fine Weather.

16th *St Matthew viii. 28-34*

The fallen angels recognise God the Son (*St James ii. 19*). Because their pigs (forbidden to Jews) were destroyed, the Gergesenes ask Christ to leave them. Do we dismiss him, lest he should interfere with things forbidden to us?

17th *St Matthew x. 37-42*

Christ insists that the love of God must come first—that Christians, signed with the Cross in Baptism, must share his Cross. Christ's ministers represent him; those who receive them, receive him.

18th *St Matthew v. 17-22*

The Old Law is not superseded, but given a far fuller meaning. Sins of word, thought and omission are as grave in God's eyes as sins of deed. It is no matter for self-congratulation merely to have never been brought within the clutches of the criminal law.

19th *St Matthew viii. 1-4*

Christ orders obedience to the requirements of the Old Law. The status of God's ministers as his representatives is not abolished.

20th *St Matthew xxiii. 1-8*

"The unworthiness of ministers hinders not the effect of the Sacrament" (Article xxvi). The Church's rules are to be obeyed, but their underlying principles must be observed (verse 23). Christians must not suppose that the Christian life consists merely in obeying a set of regulations.

21st *St Matthew xxii. 34-40*

Christ crystallises the commands of the Old Law under the headings of duty to God and duty to our neighbour. Our neighbour is anyone we have dealings with. Even those unknown to us personally share our common humanity. We can only love others as we love ourselves if we love God first.

22nd *St Matthew xiii. 10-17*

The true religion must necessarily be full of mysteries. We can know only what God condescends to show us of his eternal nature. These things are revealed to us in Christ; to many, as righteous as we are, they have not been revealed. We must keep our eyes, ears and hearts alert.

23rd *St Matthew xiii. 18-23*

Satan has little difficulty in undermining the religion of those who neglect to gain instruction in it. The instructed he tempts with persecution; and if that fails, calls in worldly interests to make them neglect their duty to God.

24th. *St Matthias*

Acts i. 15-26

Matthias is chosen to take the place of Judas who "was numbered with the Apostles" as judge of one of the tribes of Israel, and "had obtained part of this ministry" of healing the sick, casting out devils and raising the dead. Judas is still an Apostle, though lost in hell. If an Apostle can be a castaway, with what fear and trembling must *we* work out our salvation.

25th

St Luke xviii. 9-14

Both the Pharisee and the Publican go to pray in God's house. The Pharisee's prayer is not rejected because he gives thanks, avoids gross sin, fasts and gives alms—but because he relies on his own virtue rather than on God's grace. He forgets that "without God we are not able to please him" (Collect, Trinity xix).

26th

Deuteronomy xviii. 15-18

Acts iii. 19-24

Moses is the great Prophet, as well as the lawgiver, under the Old Covenant. He points to Christ as the supreme Prophet revealing all men need to know in this world of God's will.

27th

Genesis xiv. 18

Psalms cx. 4

Hebrews vii

Melchisedec brings forth bread and wine, which in the holy Sacrament are to become the Body and Blood of Christ. A priest is one who offers sacrifice to God. As the Sacrifice of Calvary includes all true sacrifices, so all true priesthood emanates from Christ, who is the great High Priest. "Once a priest, always a priest": Holy Order gives a permanent "character" to the soul. Any priests losing their souls, do so as priests.

28th

Zechariah ix. 9-12

Christ is foretold as the King having universal dominion. His covenant is by his precious Blood. Hope, that is, sure trust in God, is as necessary to Christians as faith and charity. Imprisoned as we are in material things, we must look to Christ as our stronghold.

29th

St John xii. 37-43

Christ fulfils all prophecy. Isaiah saw Christ's glory, and spoke of him. Many are blind to these truths. Many who perceive them, shrink from admitting them openly for fear of public opinion. It matters little what men say or think of us; it matters much more what God thinks of us now, and what he will say of us at the Judgement Day.

My God, I love thee with all my heart, and for thy sake I love my neighbour as myself.

4d.

THE MOTHER OF CHRIST

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MAY

THE MOTHER OF CHRIST

1st. *SS Philip and James*

St John xiv. 1-14

The second Person of the Trinity is the means whereby we may reach the first Person (*St John* x. 7-9)—to do which is the purpose of our existence. This is the reason for Christ being incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and being made Man. Christ is "of one substance with the Father" (*St John* x. 30). A way, even a way to life, is useless unless we follow it.

2nd

St Luke ii. 34, 35
Lamentations i. 12

Mary's high calling involved suffering. No other human being can know such sorrow as hers. The closer we draw to God, the more we must expect to suffer.

3rd. *Invention of the Holy Cross*

St John xix. 25-7

Three centuries later, St Helena found again the Cross of Christ which Mary had found first. During her Son's public ministry she kept in the background, but came forward to share his shame. So she is made the Mother of all Christians, in the person of St John, the only representative of the Christian Church. And all Christians are given the privilege of becoming the children of Christ's Mother.

4th

Genesis iii. 8-15

Eve our first mother was created sinless, but fell; and received the promise that a descendant of hers should retrieve her disaster. Our Mother Mary is the second Eve. She too was created sinless, but remained "full of grace" (*St Luke i. 28*), and so became the Mother of the promised Saviour.

5th

St Matthew i. 16, 17

Christ's genealogy is of deep interest. It includes two sinful women, Rahab and the wife of Urias (verses 5, 6), and two not of the chosen people, Rahab and Ruth. It concludes with Mary the sinless, of the royal house of David. Fourteen is twice the "perfect number" seven, which is composed of three (representing the Trinity) plus four (representing the universe).

6th. *St John before the Latin Gate St John xxi. 20-3*

Tradition tells that before being exiled to Patmos, where he wrote his "Revelation", St John was plunged at Rome into a cauldron of boiling oil, from which he emerged unhurt. He outlived all the other Apostles. Christ did not say that John would live till the second Advent, but discouraged curiosity in such matters.

7th

St Luke i. 56

Mary shares her cousin's joys and cares for no brief period. Our visits should be for a similar purpose, and unhurried. She returns to take up her household duties. Do we shirk these?

8th

St Luke ii. 18-20

We usually talk too much. Mary spoke little and meditated much. Did she ponder that it was from the same fields from which the shepherds came that David was called to his kingdom (*Psalms lxxviii. 71-3*, Prayer Book Version); and that the lambs were supplied for the paschal sacrifice?

9th

St John ii. 1-12

Christians also may have Christ as Guest at their marriage, in the Nuptial Mass. His Mother cares for the needs of those who entertain her, and petitions her Son on their behalf. Christ always grants his Mother's prayers, transforming the common things of daily life for those for whom she prays.

10th

St Luke viii. 19-21

It is useless to hear God's word unless we do it. Those who do this, Christ will elevate to his Mother's side in heaven.

11th

St Luke xi. 27, 28

It would have availed Mary little to have borne Christ unless she had "kept" God's word as well as hearing it. By her prayers she will gain for us that grace of final perseverance which is so especially hers.

12th

Acts i. 12-14

While waiting the "Promise of the Father", the Apostles could find no better way to use their leisure than by joining their prayers to Mary's. God the Holy Ghost desires us to do the same.

13th

St Luke x. 38-42

Though this incident does not refer to Mary the Mother of Jesus, it is appropriately applied to her in the Gospel for the Assumption (August 15th).

14th

Genesis viii. 6-12

The dove bringing the symbol of peace is a type of Mary, who is hailed as Queen of Peace, bringing peace in a troubled world to the hearts of those who love her, from her heavenly home.

15th

Genesis ix. 11-17
Revelation iv. 1-3

The bow in the rain-clouds is the memorial of God's promised forbearance with fallen man. So Mary is as a rainbow about her Son's throne, to remind him of his promised mercy to her children.

16th

Numbers xxxv. 9-15

Under the Old Law there were cities of refuge for those who incurred its penalties. Under the New Law of our Lord Jesus Christ, the prayers of Mary his Mother form a city of refuge for penitent sinners.

17th

Judges v. 24-7

The Kenites were allies of Israel, but Heber had formed an alliance with the enemies of God's people. Sisera the most dangerous of these, bade Jael lie in order to protect him. But she brought her house back to its true allegiance, and so becomes typical of God's plan to "bruise the serpent's head", through the agency of a woman, Mary the Mother of Jesus.

18th

Judges vi. 36-40

Hereditry and environment are the chief causes of our sinfulness. Mary was delivered from hereditary sin by God's almightiness. Gideon's fleece, uninfluenced by the conditions around it, typifies how by relying on God's grace Mary kept herself uncontaminated from the sinful world around her.

19th

Ruth ii. 4-12

As Ruth found grace in the eyes of Boaz, so Mary did in the eyes of God. By her prayers she gathers after the reaping Angels (*St Matthew xiii. 38, 39*) sheaves which otherwise would have been lost to God's granary.

20th

Esther iv. 13, 14

Like Esther, Mary is promoted to the first place in the Kingdom, for the deliverance of God's people from Satan's devices. We may venture to remind her that her elevation is "for such a time as this".

21st

Psalms xlv (Prayer Book Version)

This Psalm is prophetic of God's choice of Mary to be the Mother of his eternal Son—elevated to his right hand; the Mother of many children, all the members of his Church; whom all generations shall call blessed.

22nd

Proverbs viii. 12-21

Mary is the Mother of Good Counsel, teaching the fear of the Lord and hatred of pride. She leads in the way of righteousness.

23rd

Proverbs viii. 22-35

The heavenly Father willed the Incarnation from everlasting. His choice of Mary is part of his eternal decree for mankind. So he kept her free from original sin from the moment he began to form her.

24th

Song of Solomon ii. 8-14

Christ's love for his Mother embraces the whole human race, of which she is the greatest. We should show our love for him by loving her.

25th

Song of Solomon iv. 1-7

Mary's spotlessness is what Christ desires to see in every member of his Church. Her prayers are our greatest safeguard against sins of impurity in thought, word or deed.

26th

Judith xiii. 17-20

Judith, who delivered Israel from Holofernes, is typical of Mary who has "revenged our ruin, walking a straight way before our God".

27th

Judith xv. 8-10

Mary is the "Cause of our Gladness", the "great rejoicing of our nation"—that is to say, of all Christians of any nationality. She is blessed of the almighty God for evermore. Let us say "Amen" to this.

28th

Ecclesiasticus xxiv. 7-12

Christ chose that his mother should be a Jewess. The Jews were the people chosen by God, and disciplined as the nation through whom he would enter the world to throw his Church open to all mankind and make it truly "Catholic".

29th

Ecclesiasticus xxiv. 13-22

Mary is the Mother of faith ("fear and knowledge"), hope and charity—the three virtues with which we must worship God in order to save our souls. By her prayers she helps us to develop these gifts implanted in our souls in Baptism.

30th

St Matthew xv. 22-8

It would have seemed natural for the Canaanitish woman to have said, "Have mercy on my daughter", but she was right to say "Have mercy on *me*," since a good mother is more anxious for her children's ills than for her own. So she is typical of our Mother Mary who, as "Comfortress of the afflicted" looks on our sinful state, and cries to her Son on our behalf, "Have mercy on *me*, thou Son of David."

31st

Revelation xi. 19, xii. 1

Mary is called the "Ark of the Covenant". By her sinlessness she took the place of the Ark which God ordained through Moses when man as the result of the Fall had made himself an unfit medium for God's dealings with man. She is clothed with all the glory of the sun, moon and stars.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.

4d.

THE SACRED HEART

*Meditations for the Month of
June*

L. RICHARDS LEWIS

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CHURCH LITERATURE ASSOCIATION,
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JUNE

THE SACRED HEART

1st *Psalm xxxiii. 11-14* (Prayer Book Version)

God the Son took "the perfection of man's nature" (Articles II and IV), including a human heart which is joined to his eternal Godhead. "The thoughts of his Heart are from generation to generation." Men can only know what God condescends to show them of his divine counsels (*Isaiah* lv. 8, 9). He fashions men's hearts, and knows them "from A to Z" (*St John* ii. 24, 25).

2nd *Psalm xxii. 6-18* (Prayer Book Version)

A psalm prophetic of the Passion, in which Christ's Heart "melted" through the weight of human sinfulness which he had taken upon himself. Our sins are part of that agonising heat. It is we who stand staring and looking.

3rd *Psalm lxix. 17-22* (Prayer Book Version)

Another psalm of the Passion, in which Christ's Heart was pierced and broken (*St John* xix. 34). All Christ's adversaries are contemplated by his all-seeing eye. Are we among his comforters. How do we quench his thirst? (*St Matthew* xxv. 34-46).

4th *Lamentations iii. 18-33*

We should share Christ's heartbreak for our sinfulness, and be humbled. Only through the unfailing compassion of his Heart are we not consumed. Silence and quietness become us. We should wait for the Lord, who does not willingly afflict us. N.B.—The margin tells us that the original for "willingly" (verse 33) is "from his heart".

5th Exodus xxviii. 29-32

Aaron's priestly garments are prophetic of Christ the great High Priest (*St John* xix. 24; *Hebrews* iv. 14). He bears the names of God's people upon his Sacred Heart—for judgement.

6th St Matthew xi. 28-30

The Heart of Jesus is meek and lowly. Only by learning of him can we find true rest. The heavier our burden, the greater need we have to come to him.

7th Ephesians iii. 8-21

By Christ all things were made (*St John* i. 3). The Father's eternal decree is to make his wisdom known by his Son. Faith is essential if Christ is to dwell in our hearts—that we may catch some glimpse of the love “which like a fire is always burning in his Heart”.

8th St John vii. 37-43

There is always a division among the people because of Christ. Yet, through the piercing of his Sacred Heart for the sinfulness of mankind, the Holy Ghost offers his gifts to all willing to accept them.

9th Isaiah xii
Psalm lxxxiv. 6 (Prayer Book Version)

The Sacred Heart of Jesus is our “well of salvation”. Joy should characterise the Christian drawing on such a reservoir; there is something wrong with our religion if we are not joyful in it. Even in the Vale of Misery the pools will be filled for us with water.

10th 1 Samuel xvi. 4-7

Fallen man fears the approach of God (*Genesis* iii. 8). Christ is the Prince of peace (*Isaiah* ix. 6): he comes for sacrifice. His Sacred Heart knows our hearts. Many are called, but few are chosen (*St Matthew* xxii. 14). In which category are we?

11th. St Barnabas Acts iv. 32-7

Barnabas, “Son of Consolation”, is especially close to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which is described as the “fount of all consolation”. He surrenders all to Christ; do we calculate carefully how much we need give (*St Luke* xvii. 10)? If Christians were of one heart and one soul, they would have great power, and great grace would be upon them all.

12th 2 Kings x. 15, 16

Christ puts to us the question Jehu put to Jehonadab. What answer can we make? What zeal have we for the Lord? Shall we be made to ride in his chariot (*Esther* vi. 6-11; *Genesis* xli. 42, 43)?

13th 1 John iii. 18-21

Mere professions are useless. Our own hearts condemn us. But God is great and merciful and knows our weakness. Have we confidence before God? His commandment is that we should love our neighbour as ourselves. We can only do this successfully, if we do it for God's sake. The first commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul and mind (*St Matthew* xxii. 36-8). If we do this, we shall love one another instinctively.

14th

St Luke vi. 43-5

However carefully we may guard them, our words and deeds show whether our hearts are in tune with the Sacred Heart of Jesus (*St Matthew xv. 15-20*). Motive and intention matter most.

15th

Ecclesiasticus ii. 12-18

"Heart of Jesus, hope of those who die in thee" we say. The fearful hearts and the faint-hearted have lost hope, or are in danger of doing so. We need to prepare our hearts,—with humility. It is better to fall into the hands of the Lord than into the hands of men (*2 Samuel xxiv. 14*)—especially at our last hour (*St Luke xii. 4, 5*).

16th

Judges v. 15-23

The divisions of Christendom are the keenest grief to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It is because of them that Christ's Church Militant here in earth has so little effective influence in world politics. Disunited Christians are unable to come "to the help of the Lord against the mighty".

17th

Acts v. 1-6

Satan is always trying to fill our hearts by alienating them from the Sacred Heart of Jesus—and to make them deceitful (*Psalms x. 4-7*, Prayer Book Version). We can deceive others; we can more easily deceive ourselves; we can never deceive God. The attempt to do so is the gravest sin.

18th

Ecclesiastes ii. 1-11

Lack of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is the mark of a worldly heart, seeking satisfaction in material things and transitory enjoyments. These will be poor comforters at our last hour (*St Luke xii. 15-21*).

19th

Ecclesiastes xi. 7-xii. 1

As the result of original sin "the ways of our heart", our natural inclinations, are corrupt. Happy are those who have disciplined them in youth by devotion to the Sacred Heart. "Sowing wild oats" is a dangerous process. We ought not to offer to God merely the fag-end of lives chiefly devoted to other loyalties.

20th

Daniel v. 17-31

Pride gives man a beast's heart. Humility teaches us that the most high God rules in the kingdom of men. If we reject this knowledge we shall be weighed in the balances and found wanting.

21st

Joel ii. 11-14

Year by year we are reminded, on the first day of Lent, that mere outward austerities are useless, and may be actually harmful by encouraging pride (*St Matthew vi. 16-18*). They can only be useful to us and acceptable to God if they are the outward expression of heartfelt penitence.

22nd. *St Alban**St James i. 16-25**Revelation xiv. 4*

Alban, the young Roman officer, the first martyr of Britain (A.D. 303), was the "first-fruit" that the Sacred Heart of Jesus begat in this land of ours. He was swift to hear the voice of Jesus in his heart—and was a "doer of the word".

23rd

*1 Kings x. 1-9**St Luke xi. 31*

Do we tell the Lord all that is in our heart? If so, we shall "increase in wisdom", as his Sacred Heart did, united with his eternal Godhead (*St Luke ii. 52*). If not, the Queen of the South will rise up in the Judgement with us and will condemn us.

24th. *Nativity of St John Baptist*

Isaiah lxi. 1-6

John Baptist came to "bind up the broken-hearted" by preaching the "baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (*St Mark i. 4*). Only by the acknowledgement of sin and the need of redemption can the former desolations be raised up.

25th

Psalm li. (Prayer Book Version)

With the acknowledgement of sin comes the desire for a clean heart; an essential pre-requisite if we are to teach God's ways, and to become his agents for the conversion of others.

26th

Jeremiah xxiv. 3-7
Ezekiel xi. 17-21

Only God's grace can soften our stony hearts, and make our hearts like his Heart. Only then can we begin to know him in this world, as we must do if we are to be happy with him for ever in the world to come.

27th

Psalm xl. 6-10 (Prayer Book Version)

Union with the Sacred Heart of Jesus will write his new law in our hearts (*2 Corinthians iii. 3*). His wondrous works and his thoughts to us-ward will draw us to him in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.

28th

Romans x. 5-15

Faith is no mere intellectual assent to the truths of religion; this the devils have (*St James ii. 19*). With the heart man believeth unto righteousness. This must result in confessing with the mouth. It is for us to see that the glad tidings are proclaimed.

29th. *SS Peter and Paul*

Romans xv. 13-24

Peter is the first Apostle of Rome. Paul is anxious to avoid taking the credit for another's work. But the foundation of all God's work is Christ (*1 Corinthians iii. 11*). Do we always remember this, and work as harmoniously with our fellow-Christians as Peter and Paul did at Rome?

30th

1 Samuel i. 12-17

Let us be on our guard against criticising the devotional practices of others, though they may not appeal to us. Do *we* speak to God in *our* hearts, by frequent ejaculatory prayers during the day, as well as in our morning and evening prayers?

O Jesus, my adorable Saviour, make my heart like unto thy Heart.

4d.

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

*Meditations for the Month of
July*

L. RICHARDS LEWIS

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
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JULY

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

1st. Feast of the Precious Blood

Colossians i. 12-22

We are to give thanks to the Father, the source of life, "for our creation, preservation and all the blessings of this *life*, but above all for his inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ". He has made us who were in the kingdom of darkness fit to become "inheritors of the kingdom of heaven"—the kingdom of light, and of his dear Son, by whom all things were made, and in whom all things consist. He is the Head of the Body (of mankind); our sins are forgiven through his Blood, on the Cross. Though enemies, we are reconciled. Truly there is cause for thanksgiving.

2nd. Visitation of Our Lady

St Luke i. 39-45

Mary is carrying God the eternal Son, as yet unborn as man. She had unhesitatingly accepted Gabriel's assurance that "that holy thing that should be born of her should be called the Son of God", and that Elisabeth had conceived a son in her old age. She wished to see Elisabeth. At their meeting, Elisabeth's unborn son salutes the unborn Christ. Elisabeth greets Mary with a threefold blessing: "Blessed art thou"; "Blessed is the fruit of thy womb"; "Blessed is she that believed". See the reward of faith.

3rd

Wisdom vii. 1-16

All human beings are "mortal", descendants of a common ancestor who was "formed of the dust of the earth". All alike are "fashioned in their mother's womb, compacted of blood"; all men have the same entrance and exit to life in this world; no king has any other. Nor, in the divine providence, has the King of kings. He did not suddenly appear as a full-grown man. His humanity was "compacted of the blood" of our common ancestor; it became the "precious Blood" through his taking it to be made, not "*a* man", but "*Man*". "He was incarnate by the Holy Ghost (the Spirit of Wisdom) of the Virgin Mary, and was made *Man*."

4th

Genesis ix. 1-7

The blood is the life—the life principle—and so is neither to be eaten nor shed. Justice, one of God's perfections, requires that those who shed blood should suffer in the same way: "they that take to the sword shall perish with the sword" (*St Matthew* xxvi. 52). Why? Because that is to deface God's image in which all men are made, and which must be recognised and respected in all. All creatures are given to man to use for his proper end, and theirs, which is the glory of God. Man is to be fruitful and replenish the earth. How can "birth-prevention" be squared with this?

5th

Acts xvii. 24-8

God is self-sufficient, the source of all. He has no need of created things. He is in no sense the product of his worshippers' devotion. He made all "of one blood"; "we all have the same blood in our veins". He made "all nations to dwell on all the face of the earth". How foolish and futile are all wars about "bounds of habitations" determined by God—if only men would "seek after him and find him".

6th

Romans v. 12-19

Sin entered by one. *Because* "we all have the same blood in our veins" therefore sin infected mankind; this is what "the Fall" means. Adam, made in God's image, is the "figure of Christ". How often do we disfigure God's image in us! Equally, *because* "we all have the same blood in our veins", Christ, being made *man*, could redeem mankind—not merely one sample of humanity. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (*I Corinthians* xv. 22).

7th

I Corinthians xii. 12-27

We are the Body of Christ and members in particular. We should be reminded of this every time we say "Our (*not* My) Father"; "Have mercy upon us (*not* me)"; etc. All members have their own particular function. All honest ways of livelihood are equally valuable in God's eyes: we need to find our proper vocation. "If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it." We cannot rightly be indifferent to the ills and sorrows of those we do not know, *because* we are one Body, and "all have the same blood in our veins".

8th

Genesis xvii 9-14

God's covenant under the old dispensation was sealed with blood: children before eight days had passed must shed their blood to be admitted to God's promised mercies. Christ himself submitted to this and was "obedient to the Law for man". The collect for January 1st goes on to pray that we may have the true circumcision of the spirit, that our hearts and all our members being mortified from worldly and carnal lusts, we may in all things obey God's blessed will. Obedience is very valuable in God's eyes; it is "better than sacrifice", but it will cost us as much as if we shed our blood.

9th

I Kings ii. 28-34

Genesis iv. 9-12

There is no action of ours which has not consequences, which we can no more evade than Joab could. If killing the body has such grave results, how much more wounding the soul, perhaps to eternal death—by bad example, by consenting or tempting to sin. We *are* our brother's keepers, and any harm we do to others cries to God against us.

10th

Exodus vii. 14-25

Revelation xvi. 3-7

Blood circulating in our veins is "the life"; spilt blood means death. Water is *the* essential to bodily life, as grace is to spiritual life. Life-giving water turns to death-dealing blood for all who reject God's call and warnings, like Pharaoh; and for those who oppress the Prophets and Saints, and reject God's Church. "The things that should have been for their wealth become unto them an occasion of falling" (*Psalms* lxix. 23, Prayer Book Version).

11th

Joel ii. 28-32

These words are quoted by St Peter (*Acts* ii. 17) as prophetic of the coming of the Holy Ghost and Pentecost. "Visions," daydreams, ambitions of the young are wholesome so long as they are submitted to God's will by constant prayer to be shown one's vocation. The latter part of the passage is prophetic of the "Day of the Lord"—the General Judgement. The blood, fire and smoke of earthly warfare will then have its counterpart in the heavens. The very sun will be darkened, and the moon turned to blood.

12th

Isaiah ix. 5-7
Revelation xix. 11-16

How striking that this description of battle should precede the prophecy of the Incarnation, and the enumeration of the titles of the Incarnate Son of God, including that of Prince of peace. The implications of this are underlined by St John. The Word of God must wear a vesture dipped in blood. Only as the result of a fierce struggle can Christ become "King of kings and Lord of lords". Let us have no illusions that there can be any terms between good and evil. It is a duel to the death. On which side are we?

13th

Exodus xii. 3-13
Hebrews xi. 28

A sacrifice is the offering of a victim to God. The blood of slaughter cries to God for vengeance; the blood of sacrifice propitiates God's avenging justice. The sacrifice must be of the best, without blemish; the whole of it is to be devoted to God. It must be offered with faith (believing without doubt whatever God has made known to us); this gift was implanted in our souls at baptism, and must be exercised and developed.

14th

1 Peter i. 18-21
Revelation xiii. 8

How could the blood of the paschal lamb avail as a propitiatory sacrifice? Certainly it was a "type" of the Sacrifice of the Cross, but it was more than that. Mystically and supernaturally it *was* the Sacrifice of the Cross, as all the Old Testament sacrifices were identical with the only true Sacrifice. With God, there is no past or future; all *is*. Christ's Sacrifice of himself was "fore-ordained before the foundation of the world", and he was actually "slain from the foundation of the world". Do we attach too much importance to time? With God a thousand years are but as yesterday.

15th

Hebrews xiii. 10-15

The Jews were deluded in clinging to the sacrifices of the Old Covenant. They have been absorbed into the "one oblation of himself once offered" which our Lord Jesus Christ made on the Cross as a "full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world"; and with this the

Sacrifice of the Mass (our "altar") is one and the same. He suffered outside the gate of Jerusalem. We must be prepared to leave familiar things to join him, as Abraham did (*Hebrews xi. 8-16*)—as we too seek a city to come.

16th

St John vi. 52-7

With God all things are possible. The common blood of our human nature has become the precious Blood through the Incarnation, but this does not affect us automatically. We must each make this privilege our own so God has provided the means of drawing the divine life-principle into ourselves that steadily Christ may be formed in us, and that we may come to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

17th

St Matthew xxvi. 20-8

Our Lord makes quite plain what he meant when he told the Jews "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you". By his almighty power, God guarantees that bread and wine, blessed in his words by his appointed ministers, shall become his life-giving Body and Blood. Do we use this gift as regularly, as often as we might and as we should? Do we reverence it?

18th

1 Corinthians xi. 23-30

Just as neither the Incarnation nor the Crucifixion saves us automatically, neither will the reception of our Lord's Body and Blood in the Holy Communion benefit us, unless we do our part. Christ will come to us, because he has promised to do so; but he may do us harm, if we are unfit to receive him. Do we examine ourselves, repent of what we find wrong, confess, intend amendment? Or are we "guilty of the Blood of the Lord"?

19th

St Luke xxii. 39-45

Prayer, rightly understood, is not bending God's will to ours, but identifying our will with God's. This is not easy. Even the Apostles asked to be *taught* to pray. Even for Christ, in doing it, his sweat was like the shedding of the precious Blood. What trouble do we ourselves take with our prayers? Are we discouraged, do we give them up, when they are hard?

20th

St John xix. 31-7

Consider the prayer used by the priest at the mixture of the chalice at the Offertory: "O God, who didst wonderfully create, and yet more wonderfully renew the dignity of man's nature: grant that by the mystery of this water and wine we may be made partakers of his divinity, who vouchsafed to share our humanity, Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen."

21st

St Matthew xxvii. 3-10

The chief proof adduced by the Apostles of our Lord's divinity was that he "fulfilled the Scriptures". The Gospel is full of incidents recorded as happening "that the Scriptures might be fulfilled"; the Holy Ghost "spake by the prophets"; the Church is "built on the foundation of the Prophets" as well as of the Apostles. Our Lord's is the only completely "innocent blood" shed since the foundation of the world: sold for the price of a slave by a trusted Apostle. How often are *we* traitors?

22nd

St Matthew xxvii. 22-5

We cannot wash our hands of our responsibilities, but how often we try to, like Pilate. God's chosen people invoke the guilt of his blood-shedding on themselves and their children: how often that has shown itself in the history of their subsequent sufferings! *Our* children too may inherit the consequences of *our* sins, and especially those entailing bodily disease.

23rd

I John v. 4-12

Christ came by the water of his Baptism in Jordan, and by the Blood of his second "Baptism" on the Cross (*St Luke* xii. 50). The water is the sign of his being sent by the Father, and recognised by him; the Blood is the evidence of his possessing a real human Body, of his actual death, and of the completion of his atoning sacrifice. Apart from Christ, there is no "life", only existence. Because God in making us in his image clothed us with his immortality, we shall *exist* eternally, but without Christ we shall "perish everlastingly"—not just once for all.

24th

I Corinthians xv. 50-8

Fallen human flesh, as it is, cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. But we believe in "the resurrection of the *body*". Our bodies are perpetually changing, the whole material of them changes about once in seven years. Resurrection bodies will have not of the *material* of those buried, but their identity will continue, just as the bodies with which we are buried are identical with those with which we are born. Unless the Judgment comes first, we shall all die. Never shrink from the thought of death. The most important thing in our present life is to make a good death.

25th. St James the Apostle

Hebrews xi. 32-xii. 4

King Herod killed James the brother of John with the sword (*Acts* xii. 2). Consider the steadfastness of the Martyrs under suffering; how they "compass us about" like the audience at an open-air amphitheatre; how they help us with their prayers; how we should ask their prayers that if called to do so we too may have grace to "resist unto blood, striving against sin".

26th

Ephesians vi. 10-18

We have to wrestle, not with flesh and blood, but with wicked spirits who are perverted "principalities and powers". To do this with any hope of success, we must "put on the *whole* armour of God", not merely selected bits of it. Satan is immensely more powerful than we are, but he is not more powerful than God.

27th

Hebrews ix. 6-28

"Without shedding of blood there is no remission." Man's rebellion could not be set right without cost, and what a cost! "The blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God." One drop of the precious Blood would be more than enough for the salvation of countless universes.

28th

Hebrews x. 19-25

Only by the precious Blood can we hope to enter into "the holiest", but making use of it we can be bold to do so. For each of us, our own salvation is the most important matter, since that is the purpose for which God made us. Nor can we be useful to others unless we ourselves are "in the way of salvation". Still, we are to "consider one another", and we are not to "forsake the assembling of ourselves together". Any suggestion that we can now dispense with God's appointed means of grace is a temptation of Satan.

29th

Revelation v. 6-10

The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world will open the seven-sealed book containing the record of "every idle word that men shall speak" (*St Matthew xii. 36*). The redeemed are from "every kindred and tongue and people and nation"—there is no "master-race"; there can be no "National Religion"—under the new law of our Lord Jesus Christ, God's chosen people are the baptised throughout the world.

30th

Revelation vii. 13-17

The Saints come from "great tribulation"; we must not expect all to be made easy for us. They wash their robes and make them white in the Blood of the Lamb. We need a complete distrust in ourselves and a complete trust in God "without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy". Therefore, because they have done these things, the Saints enjoy the blessings enumerated.

31st

Revelation ii. 7-12

Satan is cast down, overcome by the Blood of the Lamb, by those who "loved not their lives unto the death". But Satan is cast out into the earth, "having great wrath, because his time is short". So it behoves us to "be sober, be vigilant, because our adversary the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist, stedfast in the faith" (*1 Peter v. 8, 9*).

O Saviour of the world, who by thy Cross and precious Blood hast redeemed us, save us and help us, we humbly beseech thee, O Lord.

THE MONTHS SERIES

January. *The Sacred Infancy.*

February. *The Ministry of Christ.*

March. *The Sacred Passion.*

April. *The Risen Life.*

May. *The Mother of Christ.*

June. *The Sacred Heart.*

July. *The Precious Blood.*

August. *The Holy Name.*

September. *The Church of Christ.*

October. *The Holy Angels.*

November. *The Departed.*

December. *The Advent of Christ.*

THE HOLY NAME

*Meditations for the Month of
August*

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AUGUST

THE HOLY NAME

1st. *St Peter's Chains*

Acts iv. 5-20

To-day we commemorate St Peter being freed from chains in prison (*Acts xii. 6-10*). He and other Apostles were beaten and imprisoned because nothing but death could stop them from saying everywhere and publicly that "there is no other name (but that of Jesus Christ) under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved". The Christian religion is not an "aspect of the truth"; not just one among several equally good religions. It is the whole truth God has given until the Judgement Day. To proclaim this, are we ready to face inconvenience—death?

2nd

Exodus iii. 12-15, vi. 2, 3

Jehovah: "I am"

God is "being". He is life; "the Lord and Giver of life", its source and fountain. JHVH are the consonants of the Hebrew word bearing this meaning. The Jews considered it too holy to be spoken by men, and so supplied it with the vowels of the word meaning "Lord".

3rd

Genesis xv. 1

Deuteronomy xxxiii. 26-9

Our name stands for our personality; we are quite reasonably touchy about "being called out of our name". By considering the names God ascribes to himself, we gain some glimpse of his eternal nature. "Shield": if the everlasting arms were withdrawn for an instant, we should fall back into that nothingness out of which we were made. "Reward": "I come from God; I belong to God; I am destined for God."

Our Maker

"Maker": God is the only Maker. We can do nothing without materials and tools. By an act of will God brings things into existence out of nothing (*Romans* iv. 17). "He spake and it was done" (*Psalms* xxxiii. 9). All things are his absolute possession.

The Lord of Hosts

All the Angel hosts are God's. Some, led by Satan, have rebelled. These are symbolised by Babylon: far more powerful than we are, but not more powerful than God and the *holy* Angels. "They that are with us are more than they that be with them" (2 *Kings* vi. 15-17). Those who throw in their lot against the Lord of Hosts "shall be weary" (*Wisdom* ii. 23, 24).

The Almighty

Even an evil man must acknowledge God's power. All power is God's, there is no other. He entrusts his power to us his creatures, and since we have free-will we can use it against him. How do we use it? In the end, we must account to him for our use of it. Will his sceptre smite us?

Mary calls on her unborn Son Jesus, as her God and Saviour, who has condescended to enter his world by the same humble means by which he sends us his creatures. Because of her great humility she is exalted to the highest place in heaven.

Immanuel

"Immanuel": the taking of human nature by God is prophesied. God is to be "with us"—though human frailty shrinks from such an honour. How highly we should value this humanity of ours, how carefully we should use it, since God himself condescends to share it with us (*Psalms* viii. 4-6).

Titles of God the Son

The government does rest on Christ the King; this is a cause of wonder to the world. The divine providence is ordered by Christ's counsel. He is very God of very God, and at the last day will establish his throne in peace, through justice and judgement, for ever.

The Root of Jesse

As Mary's Son, Christ is the offspring of Jesse (descended from Rahab the harlot of Jericho and Ruth the Moabitess). He attracts those outside the circle of his chosen people. How we should welcome outsiders. How restless the world is, especially the modern world! Hell is restless; but rest forms no small part of the glory of heaven.

Christ

We are spirits; the Angels are spirits. God is the Supreme Spirit. The worship of our bodies is essential, but useless without the worship of our souls. The Prophets foretold the coming of the Messiah; the Hebrew word means the same as the Greek word Christ—"the Anointed One". Prophets, priests and kings are anointed to set them apart for their special office. God the Son made Man sets himself apart in all three capacities to be our Jesus ("Saviour").

20th Psalm cxxxix. 1-6 (Prayer Book Version)
The Omnipresent

God is everywhere. We can no more hide from him than could our first parents after the Fall (*Genesis* iii. 8-10).

"I fled him down the nights and down the days,
I fled him down the arches of the years,
I fled him down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind, and in the midst of tears
I hid from him, and under running laughter."

Is this true of us?

21st *Jeremiah* xvii. 9-11
The Omniscient

Who can fathom all the tortuous deceits of another human heart? But God sees and knows all things—even the most secret thoughts of our hearts. It is easy to deceive others, easier to deceive ourselves, but we cannot deceive God, who is truth and who can neither deceive nor be deceived. We shall not profit finally by wrongful gains.

22nd *Exodus* xx. 7
Taking God's Name in Vain

By using God's name carelessly; in cursing; by perjury (calling God to witness a lie); by breaking promises and vows, we outrage the very nature of God, and incur dreadful penalties (*Revelation* xxi. 8).

23rd *St Luke* xi. 1, 2
Hallowing God's Name

Even the Apostles asked to be taught to pray. We should not be surprised that we too must learn to pray, and take trouble over prayer. Nothing can increase the holiness of God, but the first prayer that our Lord bids us offer is that God's holiness may be recognized by all on earth, as it is in heaven.

24th. *St Bartholomew* *St John* i. 45-51

We learn from *St John* that this "Son of Tholmai" is his family or surname; his personal name was Nathanael ("Gift of God"). Called from his home surroundings ("under the fig tree") he accepts Christ as God the Son, and the rightful ruler of God's people, and so joins in the prayer "Thy kingdom come".

25th *St John* xvi. 7-14
Titles of the Holy Ghost: The Comforter

Not the Condoler or Sympathizer, but Strengtheners, Confirmer. At our Confirmation he braces us to face stern truths—of sin, of the need of righteousness, and of judgement to come. He prevents us from living in a fools' paradise.

26th *St Luke* iii. 21, 22
Titles of the Holy Ghost: The Dove

The only occasion recorded when the three Persons of the Holy Trinity appear simultaneously. The dove is the symbol of the "peace of God which passeth all understanding" (*Genesis* viii. 8-12; *St John* xiv. 26, 27), which is only to be won as the result of sustained effort.

27th *Deuteronomy* iv. 24; *Acts* ii. 1-4
Titles of the Holy Ghost: Fire

Fire cleanses by destroying rubbish and disease germs; it tempers metals; it strengthens by its warmth. The "gift of divers languages" was the least part of what the Holy Ghost did for the Apostles, merely a passing necessity to enable them to "preach the gospel to all nations". "Boldness with fervent zeal" is a permanent need (*Hebrews* xii. 29).

"What is soiled make thou pure,
What is wounded, work its cure,
What is parched, fructify.
What is rigid, gently bend,
What is frozen, warmly tend,
Strengthen what goes erringly."

28th. *St Augustine of Hippo*

Isaiah xi. 1-5

Gifts of the Holy Ghost

At our Confirmation these are put at our disposal. We actually have them. But we must use them constantly, or they are wasted as far as we are concerned (*St Matthew xxv. 24-30*).

29th. *Beheading of St John Baptist Galatians v. 22-6*

Fruits of the Spirit

To the extent to which we are using the gifts of the Holy Ghost, these fruits will appear in our spiritual lives. But do they?

30th

Daniel vii. 9-14

2 Peter iii. 1-12

The Ancient of Days

Time, past and future, is one of the conditions of our life on this earth. To God, all is *present*. His dominion is an everlasting dominion. This should throw light on the problem of our predestination. God takes into account all prayer offered, from creation to the Judgement Day.

31st

Revelation i. 4-8

Alpha and Omega

The Son and the Holy Ghost share with the Father in the beginning of things (*Genesis i. 2; St John i. 1-3*); in the work of redemption; and in the final consummation.

"Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost,

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

THE MONTHS SERIES

January. *The Sacred Infancy.*

February. *The Ministry of Christ.*

March. *The Sacred Passion.*

April. *The Risen Life.*

May. *The Mother of Christ.*

June. *The Sacred Heart.*

July. *The Precious Blood.*

August. *The Holy Name.*

September. *The Church of Christ.*

October. *The Holy Angels.*

November. *The Departed.*

December. *The Advent of Christ.*

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

*Meditations for the Month of
September*

L. RICHARDS LEWIS

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THE CHURCH UNION,
CHURCH LITERATURE ASSOCIATION,
6 HYDE PARK GATE, LONDON, S.W.7

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SEPTEMBER

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1st

Genesis iv. 25, 26

"Seth" means "appointed"—to be the "seed of the woman to bruise the serpent's head"—the ancestor of our Lord Jesus Christ. God begins to form his Society immediately after the Fall; its members "call on the name of the Lord". The Bible is the history of Seth's descendants, the record of our Lord Jesus Christ. Throughout Scripture a process of selection goes on. Whatever separates itself from our Lord Jesus Christ drops out (*Acts* ii. 47).

2nd

Genesis vi. 1-14

The "sons of God" are the descendants of Seth, "the anointed"; the "daughters of men" are the children of Cain, "the rejected". In the general corruption, the Church is the Ark of salvation (*1 John* v. 19); outside it there is no certainty of being "in the way of salvation", though God's mercy is boundless.

3rd

Genesis xii. 1-3

Generations after Noah, God again selects. He calls Abraham at the age of seventy-five to leave all familiar surroundings, and promises that in the nation which shall spring from him shall come the "blessing for all families on the earth"—the promised Saviour.

4th *Acts vii. 37-43*
God's Church welded into shape by the bondage of Egypt, is rebellious in its deliverance in the wilderness on the way to the promised land; and would not obey Moses, who "witnessed of Christ" (chapter heading).

5th *St Matthew xvi. 16-20*
With the entry of God the Son into his world, God's Society is no longer confined to the descendants of Abraham and those adopted into the family of Abraham's descendants by circumcision. The rock on which God's Society is to be founded is Peter's acknowledgement of God the Son as Messiah, Christ, Anointed—who set himself apart to be Jesus, our Saviour (1 John v. 4, 5).

6th *St Matthew xxviii. 16-20*
The Apostles are ordered to "baptize all nations", because God's Church is the Society of all baptized people. Baptism is the only means of entry to God's Society. Acknowledgement of Christ as Saviour is the essential qualification for Baptism (*Acts viii. 36, 37*).

7th *Acts ii. 37-42*
Baptism is no piece of magic, saving us with no further effort. We must "continue steadfastly" in the Christian life and the true faith; praying constantly, and feeding our souls with the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood.

8th. *Nativity of our Lady* *Psalm lxxxvii*
(Prayer Book Version)

This psalm is prophetic both of the Church and of Mary, whom God made and chose to be the Mother through whom he would enter the world. A Christian has four mothers: Eve; his natural mother; Mary; and the Church.

9th *Song of Solomon vi. 4-10*
"Christ shows the graces of the Church" (chapter heading); but though gracious, the Church is an army into which Christians are enlisted to fight the world, the flesh and the devil—and should be "terrible" to those enemies.

10th *1 Peter ii. 1-10*
Christians are stones in the fabric of God's Church, "called out" to be a "peculiar people". How do we differ from the world around us?

11th *Ephesians i. 15-23*
Colossians i. 12-23
Christians are actually members of the Body of Christ. All our thoughts, words and deeds take place in him. Do we, his members grounded and settled in the faith, dislocate and disfigure his Body?

12th *Ephesians v. 22-33*
Revelation xxi. 9-12
Human marriage is "an honourable estate instituted by God in the time of man's innocence, signifying the mystical union which is betwixt Christ and his Church"—hence its sacramental character and indissolubility, and the fact that it is "not to be taken in hand unadvisedly, lightly or wantonly". The gates of the heavenly city are inscribed with the names of the redeemed.

13th *1 Timothy iii. 15*
St John xvi. 13-15

God keeps his Church from making mistakes about the truth he has made known, both with regard to his nature and his will. Christians know they are safe in obeying the Church in all matters of faith and morals.

14th. *Exaltation of the Holy Cross Galatians vi. 14-18*

The Emperor Heraclius won Christ's Cross back from the Persians (A.D. 629), and on this day carried it back to its shrine in Jerusalem barefoot and clothed as a pilgrim. No worldly position avails us in God's sight—only becoming "new creatures" in Baptism, and developing our baptismal graces by taking up our cross daily and following Christ (*St Matthew x. 37, 38*).

15th *St John xvii. 11-23*

The visible outward unity of God's Church in this world was in God's plan to be evidence to the unbelieving world of the Unity of the Holy Trinity. The Church's powerlessness to influence world-politics is the direct and inevitable consequence of the disunion of Christians.

16th *St Matthew xiii. 24-43*

The Church is holy because she teaches a holy doctrine, offers to all the means of holiness, and is characterized by the holiness of myriads of her children; but the Church in this world is composed of fallen sin-stained people, and so necessarily is always corrupt to a greater or lesser extent. This should not surprise us, though it should grieve us and in no way excuses our own shortcomings (*St Luke xvii. 1, 2*).

17th *St Jude 1-4*

The word "Catholic" means "Universal". The Catholic faith is that truth held always, everywhere and by all Christians—delivered by God to his Church. For this, we must be prepared to "contend earnestly".

18th *Ephesians ii. 19-22*

The Old Testament Prophets are part of the foundation of God's Church. The chief proof of Christ's divinity which the Apostles brought forward was that he "fulfilled the Scriptures". The Church is apostolic because she holds the doctrines and traditions of the Apostles, and because through the unbroken succession and orders of her ministers she derives her authority and mission from the Apostles.

19th *St John xv. 18-27*

We are members of "Christ's Church militant here in earth". We should not expect the world to love us, we must expect to fight; that is why we were signed with the Cross after our Baptism (*St James iv. 4*).

20th *Revelation vi. 9-11*

The "great majority" of God's Church has already passed away from this world. Others, besides "those slain for the testimony which they held", are resting "under the altar", having white robes given to them: the holy souls in purgatory, whom we help with our prayers.

21st. *St Matthew* *2 Timothy iii. 15-17*
2 Peter i. 20, 21

Many besides the four Evangelists "took in hand to set forth in order those things which are most surely believed among us" (*St Luke i. 1*). God's Church was guided by the Holy Ghost to decide which of these he had inspired. So Holy Scripture "is not of private interpretation", but to be interpreted according to the mind of the Church.

22nd

Revelation vii. 9-12

The Blessed in heaven are free from sin; their prayers are perfect, in accordance with God's will. They see our needs (*Hebrews xii. 1*), and we should constantly ask the help of their prayers.

23rd

I Corinthians xi. 17-19

Schisms are generally caused by those who see and deplore the corruptions of Christ's Church militant here in earth, and try to form a perfect Church here in this world. Our Lord has warned us that this is impossible. We must also be on our guard against becoming mere devotees of some fellow human-being, rather than of God (*I Corinthians iii. 4-8*).

24th

St Matthew xviii. 15-20

Christ's Church Militant here in earth has power to exclude from her fellowship those who obstinately flout her authority. This power should be used when necessary.

25th

St Luke xiii. 18-24

God's Church is a Kingdom. He is its ruler. We are bidden to pray "Thy kingdom come, in earth as it is in heaven". It grows as mysteriously as a seed, and spreads as secretly as leaven. All Christians are called to share in the missionary work of recalling *this* world to its allegiance to Christ its rightful King.

26th

Romans xi. 7-36

The rejection of the chosen people is a warning to Christians. We do not know "the mind of the Lord", but must "make our calling and election sure" (*2 Peter i. 10*), by "working out our own salvation with fear and trembling" (*Philippians ii. 12*).

27th

St Matthew viii. 5-13, xx. 16

All Christians are "children of Abraham" and heirs of the promises made to the fathers (*Galatians iii. 29*). Yet they may forfeit their heritage.

28th

Ezekiel xvi. 44-63

A prophetic picture of the disunion of Christendom, caused by pride and worldly power. Penitence and humility are the first requisites for reunion.

29th. *SS Michael and All Angels Hebrews xii. 18-29*

Christians have the freedom of the "City of God", which they share with the holy Angels, as well as with the Saints.

30th. *St Jerome*

I Corinthians xii. 27-30

As members of Christ's Body, all in Christ's Church have some particular place in his plan: some "teachers" like St Jerome, but all alike equally valuable in God's sight. If we miss our vocation, we have spoiled God's plan so far as we are concerned.

My God, I believe in thee and all thy Church doth teach, because thou hast said it, and thy word is true.

THE HOLY ANGELS

*Meditations for the Month of
October*

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OCTOBER

THE HOLY ANGELS

1st

Acts xxiii. 6-9

Christianity is a supernatural religion. As Christians we are bound to believe that we are surrounded by supernatural forces. Denial of this leads logically to denial of the immortality of the soul, and finally to denial of God himself.

2nd. *The Holy Guardian Angels*

Psalm xci. 5-12

Hebrews i. 14

The Angels' office with regard to man is to be "ministering spirits". In the divine providence, one is allotted to each of us as Guardian. This must not make us foolhardy or reckless (*St Matthew iv. 5-7*) but careful not to estrange them.

3rd

St Matthew xviii. 1-10

The innocence of children makes them specially dear to God (*St Luke xviii. 15-17*), and their Guardian Angels have special access to God the Father. How terrible to make a child sin—to introduce a child to sin.

4th

Psalm viii

Human beings can never become Angels. Man is a later and lower creation than the Angels. Yet it was human nature that God chose to join to himself.

5th

St Mark xii. 24, 25
St Luke xx. 34-6

Sexual intercourse, like death, is only one of the conditions of human life in this present world. Both are unknown to the Angels, and in the Resurrection we shall resemble them in these respects.

6th

Colossians i. 1-20

Faith, hope and charity, implanted in our souls at Baptism, bring us, if they are developed, to share the Angels' perfect knowledge of God's will, and to accept our own proper position in his kingdom, as the holy Angels are content with their own particular "order".

7th

Isaiah vi

The office of the Seraphim is to proclaim the perfect holiness of God, whose glory fills heaven and earth. But the heart of many is so "fat" that they are ignorant of God's holiness, their eyes are shut to his glory, and their ears closed to his voice.

8th

Genesis iii. 22-4

The office of the Cherubim is to guard things divine from profanation. After the Fall, it was necessary to guard the Tree of life, lest by misuse of it, fallen man should go on living endlessly in sorrow in a world which he had spoilt. Since the Fall, man's only "hope of glory" lies in passing through death (Prayer Book Collect for Easter Even).

9th

Exodus xxv. 16-22

Cherubim guard the approach to the Ark, which contains the revelation of God's will in the Ten Commandments. Only by the divine mercy may fallen man approach to the All-holy. "Sweet Jesus, be to me not a Judge but a Saviour."

10th

Psalm lxxviii. 50 (Prayer Book Version)
Ecclesiasticus xxxix. 28

There are Angels who rebelled against their Maker (*Job iv. 18*). They retain the angelic nature with all its marvellous powers perverted to evil. They are far stronger and wiser than any human being. They know all our weak points.

11th

Ephesians vi. 11, 12
1 Peter v. 8-10

Satan's chief object is to damn our souls, since he knows this will cause the greatest grief to God. In our own strength we are helpless against him. Only if we are steadfast in the true faith, and trust in God's armour, can we hope to stand.

12th

2 Corinthians xi. 14, 15

Satan is an adept at deceit, even disguising himself as an Angel of light. "Spiritualism" is forbidden to Christians under pain of sin. It is fraught with hideous danger, since the "medium" through whom it is practised puts himself "empty, swept and garnished" (*St Luke xi. 23-6*) at the disposal of any supernatural influence—and fallen angels can assume the appearance, voice and personal knowledge of the departed, in order to deceive.

13th

Hebrews ii

The interpretation of Psalm viii. God the Son made himself "lower than the Angels" by taking our human nature which was under sentence of death, and by experiencing death, for our redemption.

14th

Isaiah xiv. 12-15
Ezekiel xxviii. 12-19

Lucifer (meaning "Light-bearer") was the most glorious Archangel God ever made—"perfect in his ways . . . till iniquity was found in him" by refusing worship to God the Son, whose assumption of human rather than angelic nature offended him (Ezekiel's words about the King of Tyre describe his fall prophetically). At that instant he was cast out eternally, retaining his angelic powers all perverted to evil. His very name was changed to "Satan", meaning "Adversary" of God and man, because he set himself above God-made-Man.

15th

Zechariah iii

At our particular judgement, Satan will do all in his power to damn us, by recounting all our sins. Our Guardian Angel will defend us. Which of them are we helping by our present manner of life?

16th

Revelation xii. 7-12

Michael (meaning "who is like God?") takes the place of Lucifer (transformed by his sin of pride in trying to make himself "like God", into Satan) as Leader of the holy Angels. Satan and his fallen followers are cast out into the earth. They accuse us constantly before God, hating us whom God designs to fill their empty thrones. They stick at nothing to prevent us reaching those "mansions in our Father's house" (*St John* xiv. 2).

17th

Daniel x. 10-21

Michael helps those who "understand" by chastening themselves before God. Such are "greatly beloved", and "strengthened" to understand prophecy and Holy Scripture (*St Luke* xxiv. 32, 45).

18th. *St Luke*

1 Peter i. 3-12
St Luke i. 1-4

The Evangelists help us to believe in and to love our Lord Jesus Christ whom we have not seen. They, as eyewitnesses, make known to us mysteries into which the Prophets enquired and which they were inspired by the Holy Ghost to foretell: mysteries which the Angels desire to look into. This is the reward of the virtue of hope, which is a firm trust in God.

19th

Daniel xii

Michael is the Angel of the General Judgement. Then all that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake. Shall we do so to everlasting life, or to everlasting shame and contempt? The Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood is *our* "daily Sacrifice".

20th

St Matthew xiii. 47-52, xxv. 31-3

We have been gathered into the net of God's Church—inexhaustible fountains of grace are at our disposal. Are we using them so that when Christ comes in his glory, the holy Angels who surround him will gather us into the vessel of eternal happiness?

21st

Daniel viii. 15-18, ix. 20-7

Gabriel's office is to open the understanding to God's will. Those who pray, and confess their sins and those of their nation, fit themselves for his ministrations. "My country right or wrong" is a bad motto. "Patriotism is not enough." The Sacrifice of the Altar is one and the same with that of Calvary.

22nd

St Luke i. 5-25

Gabriel is the bringer of "glad tidings" to Zacharias, who is punished with dumbness because he hesitates to accept them. How often have we hesitated to accept a call to prepare the way of the Lord? As the result are we too dumb to proclaim his glory, which is proclaimed by inanimate nature? (*Psalm xix. 1*).

23rd

St Luke i. 26-38

Mary's response to Gabriel's message is different from that of Zacharias—"Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word". Mary is "full of grace"—but so were we when we came from the font at Baptism. How often have we been "out of grace" since then?

24th. *St Raphael*

Tobit xii

Raphael's office is to heal. Prayer, fasting and almsgiving are the three principal Christian practices (*St Matthew vi. 1-18*); used devoutly, they dispose us to gain healing of all ills, both bodily and spiritual.

25th

St John v. 1-9

Disease and death are the results of the Fall. Only God can remove these, though sometimes he does so through the agency of the holy Angels. God the Father is the fountain of all life and healing.

26th

St Luke ii. 8-17

The song of the Christmas Angels is "Glory be to God on high". Peace is an essential part of God's glory; it is the distinctive characteristic of heaven. Peace can only come on earth to men of goodwill, and by their means.

27th

Hebrews xiii. 1, 2
Genesis xix. 1-3

The Angels can take human form to show themselves to us. If we have brotherly love, only holy Angels can present themselves for our hospitality. If we lack brotherly love, we may entertain fallen Angels un-awares.

28th. *SS Simon and Jude*

Revelation xv. 1-4

The Angels of God's justice hail him as "King of Saints"; especially as being "just and true". Such perfections are great and marvellous to the Angels; how much more to fallen men!

29th

2 Peter ii. 4

St Jude 6

St Matthew xxv. 41

For one single sin, myriads of glorious Angels are cast out into everlasting chains, darkness and fire. How often have *we* sinned? (*Psalm vii. 12, 13*, Prayer Book Version). And still, God's longsuffering waits to give *us* further opportunities, and "space for amendment".

30th

Hebrews i. 1-13

Even the splendour of the Angels is nothing compared with the eternal majesty of Christ. The difference is not one of degree, but of kind. Worship is due to him from the angelic host, who are fellow-servants with us (*Revelation xix. 10*).

The last Sunday in October. Feast of Christ the King
St John xviii. 33-7
St Matthew xxvi. 53

Christ is the rightful King of the present world, though not deriving his authority from any earthly source, but from his eternal Godhead. His authority on earth is not to be restored by force (or the Angels would do it instantly), but by prayer and example.

Blessed Michael Archangel, Prince of the armies of God, do thou by the power of God thrust down to hell Satan and all wicked spirits who wander through the world for the ruin of souls.

THE MONTHS SERIES

January. *The Sacred Infancy.*
February. *The Ministry of Christ.*
March. *The Sacred Passion.*
April. *The Risen Life.*
May. *The Mother of Christ.*
June. *The Sacred Heart.*
July. *The Precious Blood.*
August. *The Holy Name.*
September. *The Church of Christ.*
October. *The Holy Angels.*
November. *The Departed.*
December. *The Advent of Christ.*

THE DEPARTED

*Meditations for the Month of
November*

L. RICHARDS LEWIS

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FOREWORD

Prayer is defined as "lifting up our hearts and minds to God". Together with fasting and almsgiving, it is one of the "three eminent good works". Without prayer we cannot *know* God—we can only know *about* him.

Vocal prayer is addressing to God actual words, either spoken, or formulated in the mind. All practising Christians make regular use of vocal prayer—in public worship, and largely in their private prayers.

They are also frequently urged to make regular use of Meditation, or Mental prayer, and sometimes find the prospect a little alarming. Meditation is any method of deliberately turning the thoughts to God without actually formulating words. It may take many forms. In one of our hymns we sing:

"I sometimes think about the Cross,
And shut my eyes, and try to see
The cruel nails, and crown of thorns,
And Jesus, crucified for me."

When we do this sort of thing, we use a kind of Mental Prayer. Another method is to read a passage of Holy Scripture, considering what message God the Holy Ghost has for *us* in the words he has inspired.

The purpose of these booklets is to offer such a series of daily readings, covering the whole year, and based on the particular devotion suggested for each of the twelve months. God grant that they may help some to become more familiar with their Bibles.

How to Use this Book

Make up your mind how much time to give to your meditation. Read the allotted portion of Holy Scripture slowly and carefully. If, in reading it, God grants you enough matter for consideration to fill all your meditation time, do not bother about the notes beneath each passage, which are meant merely as suggestions, if you should need them. Try to make a resolution as a result of your meditation.

NOVEMBER

THE DEPARTED

1st. *All Saints*

Wisdom iii. 1-7

Only those free from all sin can enjoy the perfect happiness of eternal union with God the All-holy. It is these we honour on All Saints' Day. They have been tried in the furnace of this life, and found worthy.

2nd. *All Souls*

I Corinthians iii. 11-15

St Jude 23

Shall *we* be sinless at the hour of our death? Fire will try all our works and burn away all that is unfit for heaven. But, (though not sinless) if we have tried to know, love and serve God, we shall finally be saved—"yet so as by fire". Such are the Holy Souls, who are being "purged" and fitted for heaven.

3rd

I Corinthians i. 1-9

Ephesians i. 1

St Matthew v. 48

The word "saints" in the New Testament means "baptized persons"—"Christians"—who are all "called to holiness". Sainthood is the vocation of us all. Unless in the end we join the company of the Saints in heaven, we have missed the purpose of our existence.

4th

Jeremiah xiii. 15, 16
2 Corinthians vi. 2
St John xii. 35, 36

Our life in this world is "the accepted time, the day of salvation", given us for the purpose of "working out our salvation" (*Philippians* ii. 12). It is our only opportunity of fitting ourselves to be happy with God for ever in the world to come—by knowing, loving and serving him here and now. We do not know when this opportunity will end.

5th

Ezekiel xviii. 25-32
St John xxi. 19
Ecclesiastes xi. 3

Especially in our death must we glorify God. The moment of our death is the most important of all the moments which make up our life in this world, because our eternal destiny depends on the condition of our souls at that moment. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and in the hour of our death!

6th

Leviticus xx. 6
1 Samuel xxviii. 6-19

Any attempt to get in touch with the Departed through human agency is forbidden to Christians. The only lawful means of communication is through our Lord Jesus Christ, by prayer and by the holy Sacrament of his Body and Blood.

7th

2 Maccabees xii. 41-5

The Holy Souls in Purgatory cannot help themselves; but we can and should help them by our prayers and by the holy Sacrifice of the Altar, as we hope that others still living will help us after our death. Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord; and let light perpetual shine upon them.

8th

St John xv. 14-16
Hebrews xii. 1
Revelation viii. 3

The Saints in heaven are God's friends. Being free from Sin, they know God's will, and their prayers are perfect. They know our needs, since they "compass us about as a great cloud of witnesses"; and we should ask the help of their prayers.

9th

St John v. 25-9

God gives immortality to all human beings alike; that is one way in which we are all "made in his image". We shall all rise again; eternity stretches before us all; but what sort of eternity?

10th

Wisdom v. 1-17

With the end of our life in this world, all the things of this world will "pass away like a shadow". All that will be left will be what we have made of our relationship to God.

11th. *St Martin*

Ecclesiasticus xlv. 19-xlv. 17

The examples of the Patriarchs provide a prophetic picture of what a Christian priest should be; like Martin (Bishop of Tours, A.D. 372) who shared his military cloak with a beggar, and upheld the faith against heresy.

12th

1 Peter iii. 18, 19, iv. 3-7

Christ "descended into hell" to do for the Saints of the Old Covenant what he had done for all mankind. To show himself to them, to preach to them the Gospel (or "Good News") of the Incarnation and Redemption by the Cross; and to set them free to be happy for ever with God. Their condition of waiting for his coming is called "Limbo".

13th

Romans ix. 14-23

It rests with us whether we are "vessels of wrath". No one can dim God's glory, which he means to be shown in love. But if we reject his love, God's glory will still be shown in justice. Over the gate of Dante's hell is written that it was created by love, as well as by justice and omnipotence (Dante, *Inferno*, iii, 1-10).

14th

Revelation xiv. 9-13

Those who consistently "worship the beast", develop the animal side of their nature at the expense of its spiritual side. This gradually imprints a deepening mark upon them. Our works follow us. They may fit us only to drink the wine of God's wrath.

15th

St Mark ix. 43-8

We must not delude ourselves by supposing that there will be any end to the sufferings of hell. Our Lord states quite plainly that this is not so.

16th

Revelation xxi

The joy of heaven consists in perfect union with God. The misery of hell consists in eternal separation from God, coupled with the realization that only in God is satisfaction to be found, that this satisfaction was attainable but that now it is too late—the opportunity is gone.

17th. *St Hugh**Revelation vii. 9-17*

All tears will be wiped away from the eyes of those who reach the happiness of heaven. They are a great multitude which no man can number. Shall we be amongst them?

18th

1 Corinthians ii. 9
2 Corinthians xii. 1-4

Saints at different times have had a foretaste in this world of the joy of heaven; but it is incommunicable. Human language is inadequate to express it; all descriptions are but the barest hints.

19th

Romans viii. 16-23

The worst worldly suffering is nothing compared with the joy of heaven. We should be ready to die rather than to commit mortal sin, which (until confessed and forgiven) debars us from it. Creation "groans and travails" because we have spoilt it by the Fall.

20th. *St Edmund**Psalms lxxix. 1-4*

With the withdrawal of the Roman legions (A.D. 400) England was swamped by pagans from across the North Sea for the next 500 years. The small Christian kingdoms which arose were always liable to pillage and slaughter. Edmund, Christian king of East Anglia, was martyred in A.D. 870 by the Danes, who destroyed churches and religious houses. How should we face such a heathen invasion?

21st. *Presentation of the Blessed Virgin* *Psalms lxxxiv*

Tradition says that Mary was brought by her parents at an early age to the Temple, to be brought up there in a college of virgins. By frequent and regular worship in God's House, besides fulfilling our obligations, we fit ourselves for our vocation. Those who say they can worship God best "under the blue dome of heaven" make themselves wiser than God. The Saints never suppose that they have outgrown the ordinary means of grace.

22nd. *St Cecilia*

St Matthew xxv. 1-13

Cecilia, a noble Roman maiden (A.D. 177) preserved her virginity and converted her husband and brother-in-law, and for this she was martyred. Wise virgins take all precautions to be ready for Christ whenever he should come. Such are the means of attracting others to their Lord.

23rd. *St Clement*

Philippians iii. 17-iv. 3

Clement, third successor of St Peter as Bishop of Rome, has his name written in the book of life as a fellow-labourer with the Apostles and a friend of the Cross of Christ—fashioning his body like Christ's glorious Body by prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

24th

I Corinthians xv. 35-49

Our bodies will rise again—differing in texture and appearance from those laid in the grave, as these do from those with which we were born, but with the thread of identity unbroken. They will bear the marks of our usage of them.

25th. *St Catherine*

I Corinthians vii. 25-34

Virginity and marriage are "vocations". Christians should ask God to show them to which state he is calling them; remembering that both states are concerned solely with life in this present world.

26th

Isaiah lxi. 7-11
Revelation vii. 9

The "double portion"—the "robe" and "garment" which form part of "everlasting joy", are soul and body, reunited at the Resurrection.

27th

I John iii. 1, 2
Psalms xvii. 16 (Prayer Book Version)

In heaven the perfect image of God (defaced by original sin) will be restored in us. This will give us perfect satisfaction.

28th

Revelation ii. 26
Wisdom iii. 8, 9

The Saints in heaven have "power over the nations", as Patrons to present their needs before the throne of grace. We can each have our own Patron Saint.

29th

Ecclesiasticus xlv. 1-15

Among the departed are some whose history we know. Many others have "left no memorial", and have none on earth who remember them. We should often pray for the forgotten dead.

30th. *St Andrew*

St John i. 35-42, xii. 20-2
St Matthew xxviii. 16-20

Andrew's first thought on finding Christ was to bring his brother to him. The Greek strangers were brought to Christ by Andrew, whose heart was already filled with missionary zeal, before Christ had bidden the Apostles to "go into all the world". The Saints are always missionaries; are *we*?

May the souls of the faithful, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

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